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THIRBY NORSTAD

General Labels 'Ridiculous' Concern Over CIA Ties With Radio Voice

Radio Free Europe was described as one of the major hopes in the future fight for world peace and criticism of it because it has received CIA support was labeled "ridiculous" yesterday by Gen. Lauris Norstad (USAF, ret.).

General Norstad, now president of Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corp., was the speaker at a Radio Free Europe kickoff dinner for about 75 businessmen, politicians and educators at Memphis Country Club.

The fund drive will run through May and the goal for Memphis is \$16,000. The goal for Tennessee is \$54,000.

"What we do in support of Radio Free Europe strikes me as being more productive than what we did in its early days," he said. "We can continue to help in the security and welfare of European countries but beyond that -- to all countries."

He pointed out that RFE reaches 85 million people and that "roughly 25 million are reasonably regular listeners" and it "must have a very real effect on their outlook."

In his talk, General Norstad did not mention the Central Intelligence Agency by name. But there was no doubt he was referring to recent disclosures that the CIA has given financial support to RFE when he said:

"My personal opinion . . . is that you should be proud that Radio Free Europe has found to have such merit in the eyes of the Government that the Government would support it. It's ridiculous that there should be any concern over this."

The general, who before his military retirement in 1963, was commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, digressed from RFE to discuss problems with the alliance.

He made it clear that he "is not an apologist" for Charles DeGaulle but said there is a tendency to blame the French president for all the problems of NATO.

He said General DeGaulle (USAF, ret.), who served with him during World War II, has "asked for" a lot of the criticism he has received. He said is quite legitimate and we have the duty to sit down and discuss the problems."

General Norstad came to Memphis at the invitation of Brig. General Everett R. Cook.

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